



Office of the Mayor
City of Columbus
Ohio

FIRST RESPONDER COVID-19 LEAVE POLICY

The City of Columbus (“City”) recognizes and appreciates the unique sacrifices of First Responders working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The City hereby establishes this ***First Responder COVID-19 Leave Policy*** to provide First Responders salary and benefit continuation for absences due to COVID-19 exposures, illnesses and other COVID-19 related reasons incurred in the service providing law enforcement and emergency services to the City. Receipt of First Responder COVID-19 Leave is intended to be the sole replacement of wages payable to an employee and is not intended to be supplemented by any benefits available through the Bureau of Workers' Compensation or Industrial Commission.

APPLICATION

For the purposes of this Policy, *First Responders shall include the following classifications:

Division of Fire: Fire Fighter; Fire Lieutenant; Fire Captain; Fire Battalion Chief; Fire Deputy Chief; Fire Assistant Chief; and Fire Chief

Division of Police: Police Officer; Police Sergeant; Police Lieutenant; Police Commander; Police Deputy Chief; and Police Chief

ELIGIBILITY

It shall be the Policy of the City of Columbus to provide paid COVID-19 Leave to First Responders for the following circumstances incurred in the line of service:

- 1. A First Responder is required to isolate because he/she has tested positive for COVID-19, or has been clinically diagnosed positive for COVID-19 by a healthcare provider;** Leave shall be available for the entirety of time the First Responder is required to isolate. When requesting leave, First Responders shall indicate the name of the healthcare provider and date(s) of tests. First Responders should submit documentation confirming a positive COVID-19 diagnosis or test to the Division. If documentation is not available or is subject to unreasonable delay, such documentation shall not prevent the First Responder from receiving paid COVID-19 Leave.

*First Responders subject to this policy are exempted from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

2. **A First Responder has been advised by a healthcare provider, local health department, or their Appointing Authority or designee(s) to quarantine because they are deemed a close contact to a positive COVID-19 individual;**

Leave shall be available for the entirety of time the First Responder is required to quarantine. When requesting leave, First Responders shall indicate the name of the healthcare provider, local health department or Appointing Authority or designee advising to quarantine. First Responders should submit documentation of the advisement to quarantine. If documentation is not available or is subject to unreasonable delay, such documentation shall not prevent the First Responder from receiving paid COVID-19 Leave.

3. **A First Responder has developed symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis, treatment, or a COVID-19 test;**

Leave shall be available from the time the First Responder is symptomatic until released back to work pursuant to the City of Columbus Coronavirus Disease Workplace Policy and the Department of Human Resources COVID-19 Q&As, and/or Division Safety Protocols. When requesting leave, First Responders shall indicate the name of the healthcare provider they are seeking a diagnosis, treatment, or COVID-19 test. First Responders should submit documentation that they have sought a medical diagnosis, treatment, or test. If documentation is not available or is subject to unreasonable delay, such documentation shall not prevent the First Responder from receiving paid COVID-19 Leave.

DISQUALIFICATION OF LEAVE

First Responders may be disqualified from paid COVID-19 Leave upon proof of any of the following:

1. Failing to wear a mask, social distance, or wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment when required;
2. Failing to adhere to published Department and/or Division Safety Protocols;
3. Failing to adhere to the latest version of the City of Columbus COVID-19 Safe Work Practices Guidance and FAQs;
4. Failing to immediately quarantine or isolate when advised by a healthcare provider, local health department, or their Appointing Authority or designee(s);
5. Failing to disclose information required under **ELIGIBILITY** to justify paid COVID-19 Leave for reasons 1 through 3.

First Responders are prohibited from performing work or receiving wages from any special duty while receiving COVID-19 Leave. First Responders shall be disqualified from COVID-19 Leave and may be subject to discipline for performing work or receiving wages for working special duty while receiving COVID-19 Leave. First Responders may continue to engage in off-duty employment, during off-duty hours, as long as no conflict exists between that employment and the COVID-19 Leave restrictions, i.e., working from home during off-duty hours while required to quarantine is permissible.

PROCEDURES, TRACKING, AND REPORTING

The Division of Fire and Division of Police shall be responsible for executing procedures consistent with this policy. The Divisions should track all paid COVID-19 Leave under this Policy and report usage at the end of every month to the Director's Office of the Department of Public Safety and the City's Labor Relations Manager.

EXPIRATION

This Policy shall expire upon the termination of the City's State of Emergency or upon fifteen (15) days of written notice by the City.